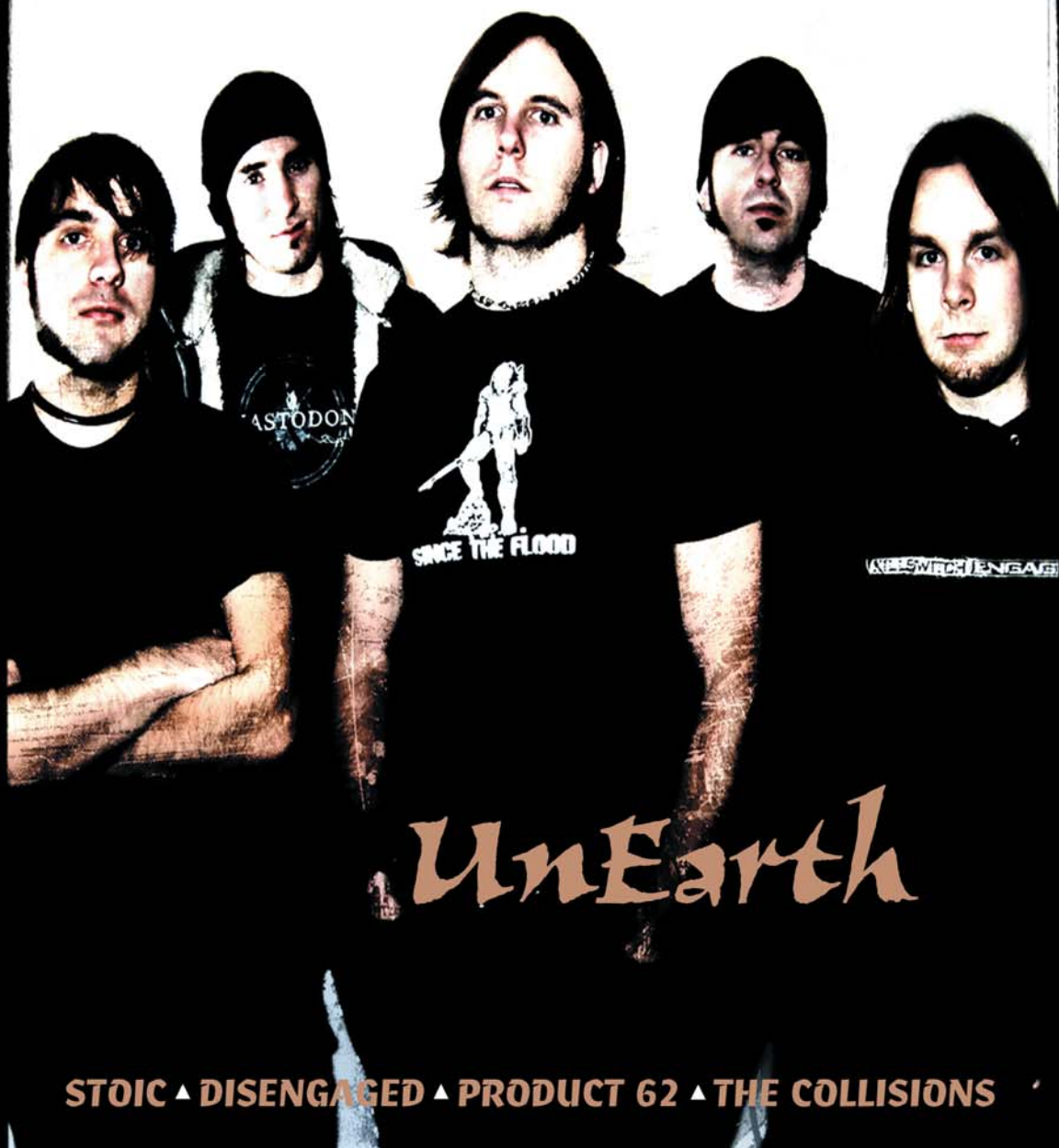


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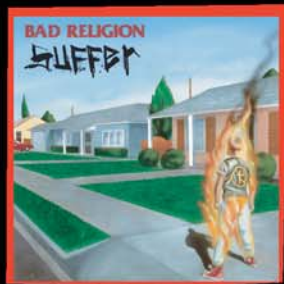
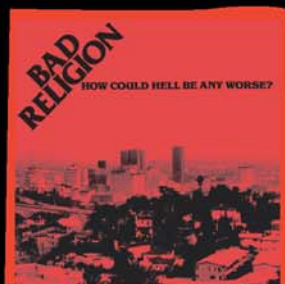


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SCM_EDITORIAL

So you have been hearing and seeing a lot of metal music lately and maybe thinking to yourself, is something new happening? Well in a way, yes and in a way, no. It's just that metal has now made it to mainstream radio; although being a supporter of the underground scene for years, this is no surprise to me. So for most of us it's not something new happening it's just something that finally came out of the underground and peeked its horns up to a bigger audience. Just check out the interview with Unearth, a New England band just recently signed to Metal Blade and playing on this year's Ozzfest. If you look at three of the big tours coming through in April, May, and July, you will see, it's all about the METAL!! First up with MTV2's Headbanger's Ball Tour, April 2nd, then The 6th Annual Metal & Hardcore Fest, April 30th and May 1st and now even Ozzfest went totally metal for this year's trek. Yes it seems that many are just jumping on the so-called bandwagon, but who cares. This happens with all types of music, so it was inevitable to happen to metal at some point. I can't remember ever hearing a band like Dimmu Borgir or Lamb Of God get radio airplay or be put on such a huge tour like Ozzfest, but it's happening. So all you nonbelievers should be aware that metal has taken over, even if it's only for a short time. Metal Horns To All. \m/\m/

- *Stephanie Marino, Metal Editor*

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PAGE 12

STOIC

PAGE 16

DISENGAGED

PAGE 22

PAGE 32

The Collisions

PRODUCT 62

PAGE 34

THE PROPAGANDA ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	6
SLUGS NOT HUGS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	11
INDIE RELEASES ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	18
FROM THE FOUNDRY ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	20
IRONWORKS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	21
KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	26
RACK SPACE ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	28
AGE OF BASS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	29
SPOTLIGHTING THE SINGER ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	30
DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW YOU DO THIS? ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	31
THE AMPLIFIER ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	38
SOUNDBOARD (MUSICIANS CLASSIFIED - FREE LISTING) ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	44
CLASSIFIED ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	46

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Hothead of Central Massachusetts is preparing to release their debut full-length disc: *Twist To Open* in March of 2004. Free song samplers are available online and

at the next several shows. The first official CD release show will be at the Lucky Dog Music Hall in Worcester on March 26. For all things Hothead, visit www.hothead.info and enjoy...

THE DENTS



The Street Dogs and **The Dents** unite for a blistering punk rock assault on their split CD/7" entitled *Round One* released on Abbey Lounge Records. Featuring Boston's legendary punk-rock-singer-turned firefighter-turned-punk-rock-firefighter **Mike McColgan** (former Dropkick Murphys), **The Street Dogs** ripped onto the Boston punk scene with their full-length debut *Savin Hill* and an all-star cast and **The Dents** are currently preparing to record their debut full-length. *Round One* will be available at all Newbury Comics locations. Go to www.abbeylounge.com for more info...

"**After Hours w/T.C. Restani**" is a locally produced program that has been the talk of the town for well over a year. T.C. has had a who's who of talent on his program, including TV sitcom star... **Sherman "George Jefferson" Hemsley** and Academy Award nominated actor, **Pat "Mr Miagi" Morita**. Also many local area bands and stand-up comedians have appeared. If your band or musical group would like to take part in the "After Hours" experience and be showcased on local television, please send a tape to "After Hours" c/o T.C. Restani, 360 Main St., Melrose, MA 02176 or call (781) 665-6688...

The Boston-based band **Chubby** has been hand-picked from a long list of new and developing artists for Abercrombie & Fitch's online campaign. Chubby is a new name to most music lovers, though lead singer and guitarist **Dennis Brockenborough** was part of the popular rock band **The Mighty Mighty Bosstones**. Chubby recently released their debut album, titled *Is It Time?*, on New York-based indie rock label Gigantic Music. The Abercrombie website offers visitors a chance to download Chubby's powerful rock track "For What It's Worth." Abercrombie is also using the track as the sound-bed to the A&F TV movie *WANTED: Big Foot, Dead or Alive*, which can be viewed from the website. The movie and download promotion will run for the month of February 2004. For more info visit www.abercrombieandfitch.com...

Dropbox, **Godsmack** vocalist **Sully Erna**'s first signing to Realign/Universal Records, will release its highly anticipated self-titled debut on April 13. **Dropbox** was co-produced by **Dave Jerden** (Alice In Chains, The Offspring, Jane's Addiction) and **Lee Richards** at Eldorado Studios in Burbank, CA. The quintet features guitarist Lee Richards, vocalist **John Kosco**, guitarist **Joe Wilkinson**, bassist **James Preziosa**, and drummer **Bob Jenkins**. **Dropbox** came together in 2002, after Erna introduced Richards, **Godsmack**'s original guitarist, to Kosco. Erna was so impressed by the band's bluesy fire, he joined in the recording process, playing drums on nine of the album's 12 tracks. Look for **Dropbox** to open for **Godsmack** on U.S. tour dates this spring. www.dropboxmusic.com...



A Benefit for the Family of John Daniel "Danny" Perna, Jr. will be held on Thursday, March 18th at Bill Ash's located on Revere Beach and is sponsored by Guitar Center, Modern Day Tattoo, Supersport Silkscreen, Harley Davidson, and *The Revere Journal*. Free to get in, but donations through raffles and door prizes will be happening all night as well as a special performance from **Johnny's Po' Boys**, starting at 9 p.m. All proceeds will go to John's wife, Sandy and their kids. John recently passed unexpectedly and has been a part of the North Shore music scene for over 20 years...

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On Saturday, March 20th, 2004 at PJ Ryans in Somerville (Teele Sq), MA it's a double CD release Party. **Sarah Woolf** is releasing her new album *Salutations from Somerville*, and **Kristi Martel** is releasing her new album *The Mule*. Angelfins Productions hope you will be able to attend this outstanding event. Audio clips of both Sarah and Kristi are available for you to listen to at www.cdbaby.com/angelfins...



The Boston-based **Meliah Rage** filmed a video for the title track of the Screaming Ferret Wreckords album *Barely Human* on the set of the Conquest Pictures film *God of Vampires* in Haverhill, MA. *God of Vampires* director **Rob Fitz** also directed the "Barely Human" video. "Barely Human" will be included on the *God of Vampires* soundtrack. The "Barely Human" video is slated for rotation on MTV2. Production on *God of Vampires* is scheduled for completion this spring, and its release date has not yet been determined. www.meliahrage.com...

Three Day Threshold has won third place in the **New England Songwriters Competition** sponsored by New Life Entertainment for their song "Black River Gold." They won some recording time out of it, so be looking for some new songs coming down the pike. Also, with their third song on MTV's "Real World" ("Behind the Barn," "Black River Gold," and "Victory"), MTV has asked TDT to do some more tracks for them. They've been working again with **Nick Zampiello** (Cokedealer/Cracktorch) doing some instrumentals and probably will release them to the public sometime in the future. Go to www.threedaythreshold.com for more details...

Kobalt have completed recording and mixing their latest effort at Machines with Magnets with producer **Keith Souza**. Mastering will take place at West West Side by **Alan Douches** in the coming weeks. Kobalt will be appearing at the upcoming Sick As Sin Metal Fest in Lowell, MA scheduled for March 21. Bands to appear include: **All That Remains**, **Burnt By The Sun**, and **Scar Culture** among others. For more information, visit the band's recently re-launched website: www.kobaltmetal.com...

Local guitar hero **Johnny A.** celebrates the release of his new album *Get Inside*. To purchase the new CD or to get a list of upcoming shows go to www.johnnya.com...

On Sunday, March 7th at 7:30 p.m., **Club Passim** will host a benefit concert in honor of **International Women's Day**. The Benefit will support **FAIR Fund**, a local women's rights organization combating human trafficking in the Greater Boston area and supporting women's rights around the world. The Benefit features local women songwriters **Meg Hutchinson**, **Lisa Housman**, **Lisa Bastoni**, **Ari Char-**

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bonneau, and a jazz funk band, **Mr. Sparkle**. All proceeds will benefit FAIR Fund's work to combat trafficking in Greater Boston. Fairfund can be visited virtually at: www.fairfund.org...

On March 29 available at Newbury Comics: **Lonesome Recordings, Volume 1**: Featuring unreleased tracks from: **Piebald**, **Damn Personals**, **The Faux**, **Jake Brennan**, **Aaron Sinclair**, **Favorite Atomic Hero**, and the first ever appearance of **The Pale Throats** On March 24th. There will be a listening party at Paradise Lounge at 8 p.m. Also there will be a CD release party at Great Scott in conjunction with The Plan on March 27th, with performances by Favorite Atomic Hero, **The Glow**, and **Hero Pattern**. Go to www.lonesomerecordings.com/ for more details...

Through his lauded work fronting **The Commotions** and his later, more electric solo efforts, **Lloyd Cole** has established himself as one of the most articulate and acute songwriters of the post-punk era. Five years since his last U.S. release, *Lloyd Cole Returns* - teaming with the acclaimed One Little Indian label - to release *Music In A Foreign Language* on March 30th. Following the release of *Music In A Foreign Language*, One Little Indian will issue *Etc.* on April 20th - a self-proclaimed Lloyd Cole lost album - followed by the May 11th release of Cole's ambient project, *Plastic Wood*. For inquiries go to www.60cycle-media.com...

Fearless Records is pleased to announce the release of a new **Brazil** album entitled *A Hostage and the Meaning of Life*. Brazil's debut album will be in stores on April 20th, 2004. Brazil is also confirmed for the 2004 Vans Warped Tour and the New Jersey Skate and Surf Festival. A musical and artistic achievement, *A Hostage and the Meaning of Life* was produced and engineered by **Alex Newport**. www.braziltheband.com...

Boston band **daisycutter** are celebrating the release of their debut full-length CD. The EP is now on sale online at CDFreedom.com and the daisycutter home page at www.daisycutter-music.com, and the band hopes to have it in stores throughout the Northeast by mid March 2004. For more info. please contact **Margot Edwards**, the Planetary Group, margot@planetarygroup.com or (617) 275-7675...

Massachusetts-based hard rock outfit **Second Audio Program** have just released their anticipated debut EP. It is available online via their website, as well as select New England record stores. Check www.sapband.com for more details...

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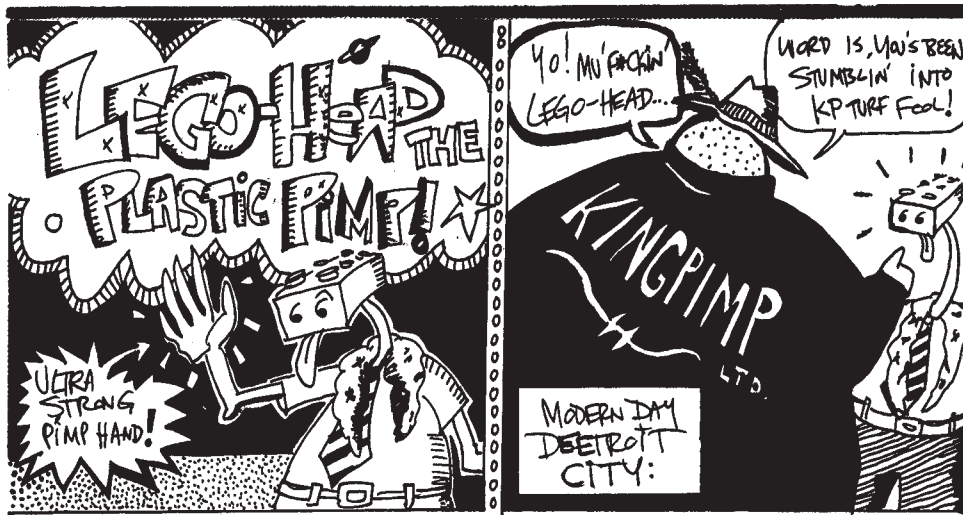
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U1nEarth



Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few years, you've realized that Massachusetts' metal bands have been entering the ranks of the elite. Bands like Shadows Fall, Killswitch Engage, and The Red Chord have been disrupting the status quo of the music world. The best part about it? All these bands have something unique to offer. They all have their own sound, style, and attitude. Well, I'm pleased to report that another one of our brethren is hitting the spotlight. U1nEarth has been tearing it up for the past six years. They've worked extremely hard, playing more shows than Boston has potholes. Just give them somewhere to play and they'll be there, no matter how small, dank, and dirty it may be. Their sound blends precise metal melodies with intense hardcore breakdowns to form an interesting mix referred to as metal-core. Yeah, I know you've heard that term used many times over, but these guys do it right.

U1nEarth recently signed to Metalblade Records and have been confirmed to play the Headbanger's Ball tour, April 2nd. Oh yeah, and they'll be tearing the baggy pants off any poseur metal freak bold enough to check them out at a little tour called Ozzfest this summer.

I spoke with guitarist, Ken, about these major developments, the new album, and everything in-between.

th

By Matt O'Dette
Photo by Grail Mortillaro



"I know people hate us and I know people love us... of those neutral bands that pretend to be both"

SoundCheck Magazine: *First off Ken, I have to congratulate you guys. You have gone from playing every small bar and club around, to getting on some major tours. For a band as heavy as Unearth, that's quite an accomplishment.*

Ken: Thank you so much dude! ...and you know that I've always been down, I'm not a dick just walking around saying my band this, my band that. I just love music.

SCM: *One of the big developments for Unearth is that you guys just signed with Metal Blade Records. How did that come to be?*

Ken: We just spent a lot of time making decisions not to make decisions at all. We got courted by a bunch of labels like Roadrunner Records and others. We were actually going to sign with another label and Metal Blade stepped in at the last minute with a very gracious offer. All the guys there really believed in the band and our contract was structured in our favor so we took advantage of the opportunity.

SCM: *You guys have been doing this since 1998. Why do you feel all of these labels suddenly took an interest in you?*

Ken: We did all the right tours, we worked extremely hard, and we broke our ass. We live on the road. We have always had great fans. We have a big cult following and kids know we are an honest band. It really didn't show in numbers for the industry people how powerful of a band we were, but certain labels did know. They were aware, and they made that assessment and offered us gracious contracts. A lot of people were bidding, you know.

SCM: *With the exception of stations like WERS, no radio stations would even go near real metal a few years ago. Recently, WAAF began playing real metal on their show called Harder Faster. You guys are on the Headbanger's Ball tour, which is also WAAF's indoor beach party. With the increasing popularity of heavy music, do you think radio will play a greater role for bands like Unearth?*

Ken: I hope it doesn't play a big part because I think the radio industry sucks. It's just force-fed music. They just look at stats and numbers. I just hope we don't ever hit that. It would be great to be put on the radio for millions of people to hear us and we sell a zillion albums but that's not what it's about with me, man. I really despise a lot of people that work at commercial stations. I mean, I'm grateful for the people that do play it and that really believe in the band, but I'm really sick of hearing the same songs regurgitated to me day after day. I just hope that the shows that are playing good bands keep playing good music and don't listen to Johnny friggin' guy with the business suit on who gets the weekly charts. You know how they do that shit and play those games. Even Slipknot, dude, people play that stuff all the time, and they are a metal band, but you know they are only playing it because it's the hot thing at the moment. I'm not really down with that. I really just want true fans, my friends and my fans, that's the way I see it. If other people become interested in Unearth, then so be it, listen to us, but I just don't want you to be fly by night. I really don't care for people like that. I love hardcore diehard kids.

SCM: *So you guys have just entered the studio to work on the new album. Wanna talk about that?*

Ken: Things are going really well right now. We've set our click tracks and as we speak right now our drummer is Mike from The Red Chord. He is going to be tracking all the drums and then I get to go in the studio and do some guitars and vocals and everything else.

SCM: *Mike is a new addition to the lineup. How did that come to be?*

Ken: Mike's a good friend of ours from way back, and he expressed some interest at a time when we didn't have a drummer. He had obligations to fulfill with The Red Chord so we wanted to make it obviously clear that if you are going to join the band, you've got to be a fully committed to it. We didn't want The Red Chord to lose steam either, so he passed another drummer off to them and things are going well for both bands. I'm just happy everything worked out. Mike really wanted to be a part of Unearth. He knew we were hard-working and really determined and lot of cool stuff was happening. He believed in us and that's why it's a good relationship.

SCM: *Can you give us any insight into what the new album is going to be like?*

Ken: [Laughs] I can tell you exactly what it's going to be like. The metal riffs are really, really melodic. There's gonna be a lot of melody on this album and there is absolutely immature, dumber-down break-downs that are just really damn hard. There's gonna be no real medium on the album. It's not gonna have any spots on it where you're just kicking back and putting your feet up, saying, "Ah yeah, that's refreshing." We're just blasting in your face with heavy, heavy, heavy parts to follow-up.

SCM: *It seems as though you guys have been incorporating much more melody into your songwriting over time. Has this been a conscious decision?*

Ken: We don't really gear towards anything when we write music. It's really just a feel-free environment.

people like us, but I just hope we're one pretty much everyone can dig into"

We throw in whatever we can and whatever works for us, works. I'll tell ya dude, my inspiration growing up was Iron Maiden. As far as heavy stuff goes, it would be Crowbar, Hatebreed, and stuff like that. Buzz and I are heavily Maiden-influenced. Nobody's going to doubt that. The rest of our sound comes from just growing up around Lynn, MA and playing at these bars that are all thugged out.

SCM: *The lines between metal and hardcore have really been blurred lately. You utilize both the melodic metal riffs and the crushing hardcore breakdowns. How would you describe the sound of Uneath?*

Ken: I'd say Cave In is the perfect example of metal hardcore. You can teeter-totter on both sides of that. I would say that we are very close to what they did but in a very different spectrum. We have a different thought process. I hate it when a band is totally tough guy and they call themselves metal because that's not it. It's tough guy. You know what tough guy is, and you know what metal is, dudes with long hair and sweatpants rockin' out. I'd say we fit into the metal hardcore end of things, but we just do what we do. We don't change our sound, we just progress as a unit.

SCM: *You guys appeal to the metal fans as much as you appeal to the hardcore fans.*

Ken: I know people hate us and I know people like us, but I just hope we're one of those neutral bands that pretty much everyone can dig into, you know? I like going on tour with In Flames and I like going on tour with Hatebreed, and they're completely opposite sides of the spectrum. I want to keep it that way. I like being diverse.

SCM: *The exposure that Massachusetts metal bands have been getting lately is amazing. All these underground bands that have been working hard for so long are starting to get enormous exposure. Killswitch Engage and Shadows Fall were both on Ozzfest this past year. You guys are on it this year. What do you attribute the success of these area bands to?*

Ken: Massachusetts is a foundation for great music. I've traveled far and wide and there's great music everywhere, but Massachusetts is such a small area and everybody is really competitive. I'm grateful for everything we've received in the past. I think it's really cool that this area is really congested with bands. I also think it's a good thing that if you look at Killswitch Engage vs. Shadows Fall vs. Uneath, we're all from MA, but we all have our own thing. We never step on each other's toes. We're just good friends, and we go out on the road and we have a great time.

SCM: *Speaking of Killswitch Engage, Adam D. is in the studio with you guys for this album. Tell me a bit about Mr. D. recording your record.*

Ken: [Laughs] Yeah dude, do you know what it is so far? We've been drunk every friggin' day. Even Adam is drinking. We are all unprofessional on this thing so far but Adam always pulls through. Seriously dude, we get there in the morning; we get drunk by like 2; then we keep tracking. When we were recording the scratch tracks, we were jumping around and spinning our guitars like idiots. It's seriously like day care, and Adam is supposed to be the supervisor, but he is not because he's just as bad as we are. It's been nothing but drinking, eating hot wings, getting sick off of food and alcohol, and then trying to make music. We're having so much fun, man. We're partying so hard in that studio! [Laughs]

SCM: *You're having a great time; you're playing metal; what more could you possibly want?*

Ken: Dude, I should be working an office job. I went to college and I have a degree in marketing and finance. I was supposed to go back to grad school, but everyday that I wake up, I'm happy. My worst day on tour beats my best day at work, ya know. I live my life happy now. Everyday I wake up and I am lucky to be in the position that I'm in because I'm creating. You can do whatever you want but as long as you feel like you're living, that's happiness. Yes, I could be making a ton of money elsewhere, but that's not right for me. I want to be doing what I'm doing right now, and I want to help other bands. I've even started a studio just so I can help bands out because I'm sick of seeing people pay a lot of money for shitty demos. I actually just recorded Beyond the Embrace.

SCM: *You just recorded Beyond the Embrace?*

Ken: All I can say is those longhaired hippies can rock man! [Laughs] No, honestly, I got the album and those guys heard some of my work with If Hope Dies on Trevor's label, Ironclad. It was just a good relationship right off. I think we put out a good product and I'm really proud of the effort they put in. It's nothing but positive feelings. I love that band, and they're gonna be my friends to come. That's probably the most important thing. Not only did I get the opportunity to make a Metal Blade album, but I made five really good friends. Do you wanna hear a really embarrassing story and I've never told anyone?

SCM: *Can I print it in the magazine?*

Ken: Yeah, you can print this. I'll let it out. So at Metalfest last year, I smashed my guitar all over the stage and the monitor, and then I threw it out to the crowd. I jumped off the stage real quick because I got



STOIC

A Band With A Mission

By Stephanie Marino

Photo by Stephanie Marino

Losing one guitarist to the surf in California and another that just didn't fit, the addition of the newest member in 2003 has been a blessing. With that being said, Stoic is their own breed, meaning four guys with different musical backgrounds coming together as a unit creating a brand of metal core that grabs and sucks you in with pure delightment. Just having put out their first EP, "Eye Conceive," on DayJob Records, and already working on a full-length, there is nothing stopping Stoic from conquering all of their goals.

SoundCheck Magazine: *Let's start in 2003 when the newest member joined Stoic.*

Nick: How I've always joined a band it's always been two or three weeks later we always have a show, and yet again I jam with Stoic and four weeks later I get a show.

Stoic: It was Middle East Downstairs. It was March 3, 2003, it was the 3/3/3 show. That was a tough night because we had changed a lot. We were definitely a different band.

SCM: *You were a crazy man on stage. You're an intense frontman.*

Nate: It's the music really. The cool thing is we are all aware of what each other is doing as a band. It's cool because the four of us constantly, like Brendan will talk to me about vocals; Jeff and Nick constantly talk to each other about instruments; and all of us can, you know what I mean. When I'm on stage it's not that I'm going crazy, it's just that the music makes me feel so alive.

Stoic: I think it made a big difference, too, that Nick is the same age as us. We'd gone from Tom who is like 34 to somebody 23, we're all the same age. We're all at a similar point in life.

SCM: *That brings me to my next question, which is about the influences, because you must be all basically influenced by the same bands, right?*

Stoic: Somewhat. I think we appreciate what each other likes, but I think all of us have a pretty wide range. I think we have a couple common bands that we're all into.

SCM: *There's a common denominator*

Nick: Yeah, we definitely come from different backgrounds, like I grew up in hardcore and metal and stuff like that going to hardcore shows, being in the pit, getting your ass kicked and all that crazy stuff. I grew up in the North Shore so it's a little bit different from Boston and the South Shore.

SCM: *So are the rest of you from the South Shore?*

Stoic: Yes.

SCM: *It is different. Very different.*

Stoic: Oh totally. We were talking about it today. Like the scenes weren't even the same.

SCM: *They're still not. Anyway...*

Stoic: So after we played our first show with Nick. We knew we had to go back to the drawing board! And him joining the band has definitely made it easier. Tom was a hard dude to deal with... but he [Nick] was a go-getter. As soon as he joined the band he wanted to help out with everything. We all have a lot to do other than the band. We all have lives outside of that.

Brendan: There's a great connection between the four of us.

SCM: *You can tell when you guys play together.*

Jeff: I look back and I think I've never been in a band where I've been more connected than being with these guys. Not only could I play with them and write great music with them, I can also hang out with them and go party with them. A lot of bands you see don't have that chemistry whereas they get off stage and they go their separate ways and that's it.

SCM: *Give me all the background on how you hooked up with DayJob Records.*

Nate: This is the situation: I've known Al for a couple years and I've always kind of confided in him as someone I can look to for advice.

Nick: The Godfather.

Nate: We call him The Godfather, definitely. He's The Godfather of Rock, right there, Alvan Long. I've always talked to him with questions about the band and he's actually the guy that set me up with the room. He wanted to put us in the studio, so that finally happened. While we were doing the recording process and everything that was when, it was actually kind of Al's idea. He kind of approached Ken Cmar and it was like, they worked together for years putting out records, Alvan doing recording and Ken manufacturing stuff and whatever. So he [Alvan] said why don't we just start a whole new label, the two of us [Alvan and Ken], you know where I offer recording and you offer label support and the manufacturing and all that. They were like, great. So actually this kid [Nick] came up with the name.

SCM: *DayJob?*

Nick: It was Curb Job. I was like what about DayJob?

SCM: *Right, everybody has a day job but you're trying to make this your day job. Everybody wants that.*

Nate: So it was kind of ironic that at the same time Duncan Wilder Johnson, he was Wonderdrug's staff designer for three years and he was getting ready to leave, he moved to Europe for three months, he's back now, this was back in October. Right after we signed with DayJob this all happened. I went to school at Mass Art, for multi-media arts, so I can do video, graphic design, a lot of different stuff and Ken knew that and he said, Nate, would you like to work? He needed a graphic artist there and he also needed a graphic artist to help develop the new label, so I said, Hell yeah, I'll help you do that. I started working for Ken part-time doing the graphic design for both Wonderdrug and DayJob. Well Stoic needs graphics so it's kind of almost like we have an in-house graphic designer. It's cool because I develop graphics and then I'll show these guys and they'll be like, no change this, and this and this. Also Alvan Long is a really big artist and his wife, Gail Rush, who's done all Stoic's photography, makes DayJob like a team now. You've now taken Wonderdrug, Curve of the Earth, New Alliance Studios, and Gail Rush Photography and you put it all together and it's like now you have this team of musicians and artists who are kind of working together.

Brendan: It's more like an army, I think.

Nick: You hear all the horror stories about local labels and how they sell to the highest bidder and whatever like that and they keep bands down. Really surprisingly when I was with the other band we've had opportunities, but seeing what Ken and Alvan want to do, they just want to work hard, have fun and just get the bands to the next level. They're not in it to cash in.

SCM: *They seem like that type of people because they've been doing it so long. You mentioned you are already working on a full-length too?*

Stoic: Yeah, we've already started working on it. It should be out, we're anticipating September.

SCM: *Are some of the songs that are on "Eye Conceive" going to be on this?*

Stoic: Hopefully not. There should be none. There should be all new stuff. Plus with DayJob we do a lot of the work also. We're not just sitting there like oh we're signed now, so it's time to just kind of sit back. It is more work. We're actually like employees of the label. More or less.

SCM: *That's how it is and it's good to be like that.*

Stoic: Plus I think that Ken and Alvan definitely communicate with us. I mean we're fortunate enough to work in the same building but I also think, even if we didn't work in the same building they would be on the phone calling us. They're definitely hands-on, involved one hundred percent and knowing what's going on with us and where we are at.

INDIE RELEASES

ADOLF & THE PISS ARTISTS
Hate Generator
(TKO Records)
apapunk.com



Great straight-ahead hardcore punk from a GA band that's already broken up. Umm... Nice knowing you? What could've been? These things kill me! They might continue as APA with a totally different lineup, but maybe not? So what you're telling me is that one or two guys from the band aren't quite ready to let this go, so they're going to try and change the name slightly and go out with a different band and try to play the same tunes and they want to use this CD as some sort of a springboard? That's sort of sad. Yep, you had something special here—rarely does lightning strike twice in the same place, though. I'd recommend a fresh start, but then that's just me...best of luck, boys!

- Smash

THE VANDALS
Live at the House of Blues (CD & DVD)
(Kung Fu Records)
kungfurecords.com

The Vandals are one of those bands that have been around forever, friends have passed me their CDs about a million times, but they have never really taken hold with me until recently. I'll take it as kismet that my editor dropped this CD on me? I'll tell you folks what: I'm very glad he did give this one to me. Whether you're a long-time Vandals fan, a later-day convert (like myself), or have never listened to them—this is for you! It's all here—the irreverent stage banter, the high-velocity-skater-punk hooks, the laugh-out-loud lyrics, the tunes we all love ("I've Got an Ape Drape," "Pizza Tran," "My Girlfriend's Dead," etc.) — and it's all very P.C. (Punk Correct). There's nothing like a great live disc to hook me...and then there's the matching DVD...yowza! Can't wait for the Warped Tour...

- Smash

SOME KIND OF HATE
Undisputed
(Bridge Nine Records)
somekindofhate.com



These are always tough calls. The hardcore end of the punk spectrum is a difficult thing to listen to as a critic for quite a few reasons. I mean, if the band is outright awful or the production is off—that's easy. But, if the basics are there

(as they are here), then it gets tough. To stand out in this genre you've gotta be head and shoulders above the rest or else it's simply all the same. I hate to talk about lyrical insights or melody or hooks or any of that...but that's what distinguishes the "good stuff"! I mean—that's what catches (and keeps) your attention, that's what makes you remember the stuff, and that's what makes it "music" as opposed to "noise." Some Kind of Hate aren't bad, in fact, I'd even call them good; but they are one-dimensional. There are some interesting aspects to the music—the tempo/meter changes in "Dog Tags" and the slow build of "Forgiveness is a Bitch" to name a few—but for the most part it's all the same. The music doesn't stray far, although the guys are great players and are musically adept. The lyrical subject matter is so tightly within the "Me, the angry youth, against all the rest of the phonies, ingrates, and general population of the world" that there's no variation at all. It's too much. Any point of view, taken to such a narrow degree, wears thin. To top it all off, they don't even have much of a sense of humor about it all—the song "Calling All Bastards" focuses its anger at folks who seem to always want attention. Hmm... All in all, much better than bad, not quite great, definitely good.

- Smash

JOHNNY A.
Get Inside
(Favored Nations)
johnnya.com

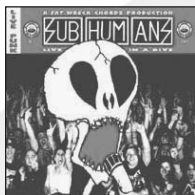


Although everyone knows that Johnny A. is one of the not-to-be-missed landmarks on the Boston music scene, putting him into an exact category within the scene is an entirely different matter. Over the last 25 or so years, he has gone from a snotty-nosed punk to roots rocker to hired axe-slinger to ace studio cat to...guitar virtuoso?!! Yeah, I said virtuoso—and I don't have to back that up, because "Get Inside" backs it up for me! Mark my words, "Get Inside" will be the launching pad that Mr. A. has been searching for his entire life. On his sophomore release for Steve Vai's Favored Nations label (and his first release recorded specifically for the label), Johnny gets to stretch and expand his musical horizons to new territories. Not only is his playing highlighted here; his composition and arranging skills are spectacular! There's so much here that I don't even know what to point out as highlights! "Hip Bone" is Bossa-Nova ala Steely Dan. "I Had To Laugh" has a real country/Satriani groove going until the horns come in and give a major-key-happy touch. The title track seems perfect for AOR—there's a really contemporary thumping backbeat with a touch of twangy darkness.

"Krea Gata" ebbs and wanes like the tide until it swells into a moaning blues and eventually falls back to hush. "Stimulation" gives the most variety—going seamlessly from spaghetti western to fusion, samba, and beyond. He even gives an up-tempo, bopping version of "The Wind Cries Mary" that would have Jimi taking notes... Congrats, Johnny—you've made the big time.

- Smash

SUBHUMANS
Live In A Dive
(Fat Wreck Chords)



This is, well, a SUBHUMANS record. If you are a die hard SUBHUMANS fan, this one is for you. It is the SUBHUMANS in top form, in all their glory. Proving if anything, the SUBHUMANS have only gotten better with age. That said, I do not fall into that category anymore. I cut my teeth on the SUBHUMANS. I wore my "Day the Country Died" T-shirt til it literally disintegrated. But now I've grown up, I guess I've widened my perspective concerning punk rock or something, and I find the SUBHUMANS boring in some respects. Don't get me wrong, I believe in my opening statements. But I just couldn't get through this whole album. By about six songs in (there are 26 total) I realized (yawn) that I could no longer tell where one song ended and the next began.... Recorded live in April of '03 at the Corona Showcase Theater, "Live in a Dive" captures the raw energy of a SUBHUMANS show, but sounds so clear, one might think that it was recorded in a studio, with the sounds of the crowd just edited in. The viciousness with which these guys sonically assault the listener reminds us that these guys still are the real deal, and they still believe in the same politics (both moral and social) that they were writing about in the early '80s. While classic SUBHUMANS songs such as "Rats," "From the Cradle to the Grave," "Walls of Silence," "Time Flies," or "Worlds Apart" are not to found on this record, it does offer up a decent selection covering all six of their past records.

- Cherry Valance

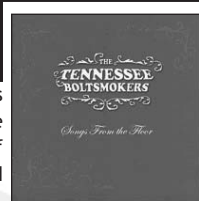
VARIOUS ARTISTS
New York City Rock 'n' Roll
(Radical Records)
radicalrecords.com

This compilation of New York City "rawk" bands includes Banana Fish Zero, Apocalypstik, Detox Dartings, Pisser, and my personal favorite, Skum (with umlauts over the "u"), who has a song called "Big Black Cock." Radical Records is like the bizarro version of a good label comp by SST or Sub Pop or Merge or what-have-you. This shit is totally unlistenable even as kitsch. It's embarrassing. There are 22 songs here and I can't make it all the way through a single one. The best band on this disc makes the worst Allston Rock City band sound like the second coming of Motorhead. In the liner notes, journalist and compiler

Steven Blush writes about his years of Sisyphus-style uphill struggle, when "four loser bands I booked literally brought in \$15 revenue" and "Village Voice music editor Chuck Eddy let me know that he heard about what I was doing, and that he was not into it." I'm with Chuck. These bands are all on the fast track to glamorous minimum wage retail gigs. Your revolution is over, Mr. Blush. Condolences.

- Mike Baldino

THE TENNESSEE BOLTSMOKERS
Songs From The Floor
ERIC LEWIS & ANDY RATLIFF
Edgar's Blues
(Madjack Records)
tnboltsmokers.com
ericandandy.com



Some of the Boltsmoker's music resembles that of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, or some of the work that Jerry Garcia did with David Grisman ("Under-tow"). Singer Mark McKinney, who also plays guitar, has a gentle voice rich with emotion that is particularly well suited to his mountain music compositions, occasionally quavering a bit, reminding of Gram Parsons and adding an air of authenticity to the songs. These are just tales put to music, but McKinney's delivery pulls you into an uncomplicated world that you hate to leave. The guys are all proficient with their traditional instruments - Todd Cook on upright bass, Andy Ratliff on mandolin and banjo and Eric Lewis on guitar, dobro, and fiddle. Lewis and Ratliff's album away from the Boltsmokers is even homier, barn dancing through bluegrass instrumentals like the traditional "Old Mother Flanigan" and Lewis' "Tennessee Barn Burner." The pair also harmonizes beautifully with guest John Riley on "Think of What You've Done" and Ratliff's "The Kaintuck," a stunning a cappella number.

- Kevin Wierzbicki

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FROM THE FOUNDRY

DEICIDE

Scars of the Crucifix
(Earache Records)
earache.com



The boys of blasphemy are back yet again. Decide has a new label for the first time since they released their debut album on Roadrunner Records in 1990. Their new work of hatred, "Scars of the Crucifix," is out on Earache Records and has given the band a fresh new beginning. I must say that I have lost a bit of interest in Deicide over that past few years, however, this album is a step back in the right direction. With blistering speed, tremolo guitar picking, and vocals so damn evil that they would make Anton Levey run for heaven, Deicide is set to continue their satanic reign. The vocals are layered quite a bit on this album, giving them a full and powerful feel. The album also contains a ton of searing solos that are both fast and intricate. There is also a bit of groove on the disc that makes you wanna bang your head through a glass window. The artwork is done by none other than tattoo legend Paul Booth. When all is said and done, the album contains what you would expect from the death metal veterans, and when compared to their last few albums, I'd say this one is worth selling your soul for.

- Matt O'Dette

WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE
Go To Hell
(Underdogma Records)
wereallgonnadie.com



First off the artwork for "Go To Hell" is pretty unusual, you see it's a reversible cover. You can either have an evil-looking Jesus or an evil-looking Mary holding baby Jesus, both of which are depicted on stained glass, so you think you are looking at a church window. Very cool. Now to the music, which is definitely heavy and very good. A trio out of Boston, these guys make a lot of noise in a way that is different than most other heavy bands. I think it may have to do with the vocals, Jim has a very distinct voice, which in my opinion, gives We're All Gonna Die a unique sound. Songs like my faves, Track #3, "No Root" and Track #7, "I'm Sick Again," just have that style and taste I can't get out of my mouth. All the tracks on "Go To Hell" are pretty damn good and this being their first CD put out by Underdogma Records is a good sign there is more to come. I like the added live Track #10, "Twelfth Step," which is another pleasant, unusual thing, especially for a first CD.

- Metal Wench

SEEMLESS

(Losing Face Records)
seemlessband.com

Well what do you say first about Seemless. With the original frontman, Jesse, of Killswitch Engage, ex-members of Shadows Fall, Overcast, and Medium, it's hard not say METAL!! I did that in the metal scream, now do it with me. Because if you haven't heard or seen Seemless yet, you are missing out. This self-titled

CD is the first, of I hope many, off Losing Face Records for Seemless. With tracks like #8, "Lay My Burden Down" and #3, "The Wanderer," it's no wonder they already get major radio airplay. Thanks to metal going mainstream on WAAF with Mike Hsu's Harder Faster being on six nights a week you can now hear shit like this all the time. Seemless not only has the vocals that are great, but one of the best damn drummers around, Derek, and with great drums comes great rhythm and guitars. So a well-rounded Seemless is what you get. Hey, guys great name. Pick up the CD and go see them live, Metal Wench has commanded you.

- Metal Wench

STAMPIN' GROUND

A New Darkness Upon Us
(Century Media)
stampingground.f9.co.uk



Whenever a CD comes my way with a little sticker on the cover boasting proudly about how the band in question has created some new fangled combination of metal and hardcore, I have to resist the urge to throw myself off a bridge. Perhaps no other genre has produced as much terrible music as the metal/hardcore genre. In practice, "metal/hardcore" has become code for dumbed-down, mediocre metal. Sure, amazing bands like Shadows Fall and Converge are out there, but they are very much the exception to the rule. We can now officially add the UK's Stampin' Ground to this list of exceptions. Solid musicianship and interesting song structures are the mark of this release. Stampin' Ground have toured with Sepultura and Biohazard. "A New Darkness Upon Us" often feels like a combination of the best aspect of those two bands' early records.

- Shawn Macomber

FRAGMENTS OF UNBECOMING
Skyward-A Sylphe's Ascension
(Metalblade Records)
Metalblade.com



Once a side project band from members of Mortified and Venereal Disease (bwahahahaha!), Fragments Of Unbecoming soon after formation, given the response from their collaborative efforts, made the "real" band commitment. Upon first glance at the CD inlay, with band member names like Wolle Schellenberg, and Ingo Maier...yup, you guessed it, we got ourselves a brutal case o' Euro-metal here, mainly grabbing from the early Swedish Death Metal style. All in all, I'm keepin' this one (some of the double kick work sounds like a helicopters f'n rotor on liftoff! THAT fast.), but many people might be turned off by the cookie monster vocals...not quite as evil as anything Obituary, but this guy ain't no Enrique Inglesias either!

- Deek McDeekula

GOD FORBID
Gone Forever
(Century Media)

Their bio yaps on about how these guys continue to raise the bar for Meshuggah n' Dillingher Escape Plan-type metal...and for once the bio sent ain't fulla' crap. This one's been in my car CD player for a few days now mainly because of the Pantera-esque guitar offerings of Doc and Dallas Coyle. Exodus had their "H-Team," so I now dub these six-stringed lunatics the "D-Team" - for lack of anything more creative at the moment (it's late, gimme a break). Many of the tracks here don't necessarily reflect the titles given, but trust me, the "What will the future hold?" song is the balls! - like 8 of 'em!



- Deek McDeekula

PRONG
Scorpio Rising
(Locomotive Music)

Ya' know, I'm sure I mentioned in reviews past that Prong, alongside Clutch, Coroner, and Iron Maiden, are my all-time favorites, and I'm sure I'll forever buy ANY B, C, or even D-side release that Prong puts out, but I can't help but feel that this CD



was somewhat crapped out in an eager attempt for Tommy Victor to get back on the road (Rob Zombie stint now over) and bang some dames. I will have to say though, that this CD is still leagues better than a good deal of the metal fodder that is tossed my way, and the first three cuts on this album completely f'n slay once given a chance....yet overall, this CD does not have the immediate impact that others from Prong's vast catalog have. I'm not so thrilled about the absence of Ted Parsons (original drummer) either, since "new guy" Dan Laudo, although solid, isn't nearly as ingenuitive, and overtly relies on a lot of ghost-noted drum-work. All in all, it's PRONG alright, but a simplified version of.

- Deek McDeekula

SYMPHORCE
Twice Second
(Metal Blade)
symphorce.net

Dream Theater-esque progressive metal with Iron Maiden vocals, squealy solos, solid musicianship, and hyperbolic lyrics. Pretty much what you'd expect from this genre. On one hand there aren't any good surprises, but, then again, there are no bad surprises either. It's the standard trade-off with this genre. The upside is you don't need me to tell you if it's your cup of tea or not - you probably already know.

- Shawn Macomber



IRONWORKS

Earache's **Decide** has done it again with their newest Satanic death metal project, "Scars of The Crucifix." Coincidentally it's out in time for all the highest of holidays and at the same time as The Passion of The Christ. I wonder how much controversy will come from this CD. www.earache.com...

A release date has been set for the highly anticipated **New England Metal and Hardcore Fest 2003 LIVE DVD**, put out by Trustkill Records. That's right kiddies, get to see what you may have missed by getting your DVD on March 23rd at Fat Cat, 232 Worthington Street in Springfield, MA. Trustkill Records has a teaser up on their site just to push you over the edge, www.trustkill.com/multimedia/videos...

The **6th Annual New England Metal & Hardcore Festival** will be held at The Palladium in Worcester, MA, on Friday, April 30th, doors at 3 p.m., **Killswitch Engage, Arch Enemy, Machine Head, God Forbid and Every Time I Die** are confirmed as headliners. Saturday, May 1st, doors at noon and confirmed headliners will include **Iced Earth, Children Of Bodom, Zao, Throwdown and Bleeding Through**. Also appearing are: **As I Lay Dying, The Black Dahlia Murder, The Bled, Burnt By The Sun, Darkest Hour, Deadwater Drowning, Full Blown Chaos, Most Precious**

Blood, The Red Chord, Six Feet Under, Speedkillhate and many more. Talent is subject to change. This year there will once again be a film crew recording every second of action on the stage and behind the scenes

for a LIVE DVD. You can pick up your tix at all Strawberries locations, online at tickets.com or by phone at 800-477-6849....

Ozzfest 2004 has been announced, the tour starts on July 10th and will be here in Boston at The Tweeter Center on Sunday, July 18th. There is a chance a second date will be added so stay tuned for that info. As for the lineup, Main Stage is **Ozzy,**

Judas Priest, Slayer, Dimmu Borgir, Superjoint Ritual, and Black Label Society. Second Stage is again as impressive as last year's with **Slipknot, Hatebreed and Lamb of God** headlining, **Atreyu, Bleeding Through, Lacuna Coil, Every Time I Die, Unearth and God Forbid.** Holy crap I can't wait!!!!



DISENGAGED

Talented and Demented

By Stephanie Marino

Photo by Stephanie Marino



Five guys from just South of Boston with flare and attitude like no other. Their full-length CD, *The Ocean*, was recently put out by Not Common Records, aka JoJo Dancer, and has been doing well with frequent airplay and many bone-crushing shows. Songs like "Murder The World" and "Decomposing Pile Of Ex-Girlfriends" should give you some clue as to what Disengaged is all about. They are an extreme thrash band with Metallica-like style. Solos flowing and drum beats stomping, with a singer who does everything and then some. Blood has been shed at many Disengaged shows, but only to themselves. They put everything into what they do and make sure the audience knows it. So here's the story from their FHC days to now. Read on and prepare to be assaulted.

SoundCheck Magazine: *Disengaged derived from another band, let's start there.*

Disengaged: We were originally FHC, Full House Crew - Don Wan Mac, Dino Bland, Emilio Cava, and Greg House Crew, it was a tribute to John Stamos. The FHC was about what true hardcore is supposed to be. That area inside every one of our souls that knows that everything we have in life, we have John Stamos to thank. He was the original, he started it all, so we had to pay tribute to him. Some people say that Elvis started rock 'n' roll that's pretentious propaganda. That hard rock 'n' roll truly started with John Stamos. Every rock historian or theorist will agree with that.

SCM: *So how did that become Disengaged?*

DGD: Disengaged is the unfortunate spawn of when Greg House Crew left FHC, and we could no longer continue creating music with such messages as we did with FHC. We decided against attempting to recreate that and just went with the rock energy of that time.

SCM: *So the addition of two new members came in to play.*

DGD: Well Moranzo Llamas, guitarist, was our original roadie and it spawned from there. As technical

as our songs get, he knew them all.

Moranzo Llamas: I didn't like it, but I knew it.

DGD: About a year later, El Gordo Cafe joined us in the recording of the CD to put solos where they were needed. After the recording, El Gordo Cafe became a permanent member, after the demise of his former band, Breedingground and Fatallica.

SCM: *Your entire CD, "The Ocean," is all about killing and dying and murder and drowning. Actually one of my favs on the CD is the title track because it has an actual drowning incorporated into the song.*

DGD: Well most people, and I don't think most people understand this, because they fall into the most people category, so this would be speaking about themselves, but most people require death in order to come away from disturbing my peace. That's why we started carrying guns. Now, people stay out of our way.

SCM: *So basically it's all about hating everybody that's in your way.*

DGD: Most of it's out of Dino Bland's head. But we just try to make it as fast and, like, with the most energy as possible and usually rage goes along with that.

El Gordo Cafe: If Hate and Rage could have a spokesperson, it would be Disengaged.

Don Wan Mac: You want to know what makes me angry, it's Jimmy Flynn. He is our nemesis.

SCM: *Wow, let's move on to the recording.*

DGD: Emilio Cava did everything.

SCM: *O.K. but elaborate on that, because there are clips from movies and as stated earlier and actual drowning.*

Emilio Cava: The drowning audio took me about 24 hours to create. I took like 40 or 50 samples and put them all together, stuff I found online and created some of the sounds too. Some of the intros to our songs are from movies. I recording and produced everything. Recorded all the tracks at Stone Cutter Productions and did all the mixing at my house. There was more I wanted to do, but we were on a time limit and already had the CD release party booked.

SCM: *Next was a story about the song, "Two Shots and a Pack of Newports," but due to the nature of the content I cannot reveal it. Please ask the band members yourself and tell them I sent you. Back to the release of "The Ocean."*

DGD: It was at The Middle East back in June 2003 and we've been playing around New England non-stop. January is the first month we had off, just trying to write new stuff. We are doing a split with the band Ravage, pure '80s metal band from Malden. if you like Iron Maiden style music, you will like Ravage and they're good friends of ours. We are going to do a Ravage cover, "The King Forgotten," and they are going to do a Disengaged cover. We are also doing a song for a comp CD, we are recording "Girlfight At The Mall," that's not any release of ours yet. It will be on the *North Shore vs. South Shore* comp, put out by Not Common Records. And then we will start recording for a new album.

SCM: *Do you have ideas for a new record?*

DGD: We are thinking about Renegaged, which will be a techno remix of our songs. We're collaborating with a bunch of different DJs. Dance mixes too.

Emilio Cava: It's still in the works, like I'm setting a lot of the stuff up myself, but I'm going to have some other DJ's come in and help me.

SCM: *But it will be all remixes of "The Ocean"?*

DGD: Yes, the whole CD as dance and techno remixes.

SCM: *That sounds interesting. How many songs will be on the split CD with Ravage?*

DGD: In total, 10 songs, four from Ravage and four from us and then the one cover from each band. We are just trying to figure out which songs we will be putting on the split.

SCM: *Well I look forward to that; I'm a fan of Ravage, too, so i can bet the CD will be good.*

El Gordo Cafe's brother, Detroit, had this to add. "I haven't seen them actually perform together, but individually they've done a lot of shitty things."

SCM: *Here are some extras that I thought you would enjoy.*

Moranzo Llamas: Disengaged has a card-carrying member of the NRA in the band and we all support the NRA.

Dino Bland: I support anything that leans toward the right. I would consider myself Ronald Reagan with bigger ears. 🐘

For more info on Disengaged, check out www.notcommonrecords.com and come see the mayhem live at one of their shows.

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Frank Zappa
Morphine
Susan Tedeschi
Rounder
Medeski Martin & Wood
Sophie B Hawkins
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Joan Jett
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Natalie MacMaster
Magic Dick & J Geils
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KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY

By Karl Russo

Making The Move?

Hey readers! This month we're going to discuss the pros and cons of relocating yourself and/or your band members to gain better exposure, thus increasing your chances of acquiring a record deal. While I am a proponent of playing mini-tours in cities and states outside your local scene, actually moving your band may not be the best career move.

Let's present a scenario. Your band has played a good amount of gigs and developed a relatively large fan base but your efforts seem fruitless in inking that deal despite all the connections you've made and the personnel you've hired to help promote your music. This stagnant state could be caused by many different reasons but let's look at the possibility of remedying it via packing up lock, stock, and barrel and moving to an area that would lend itself as a better marketing ground for musicians. Is this really going to be a worthwhile career move? To be honest, anything is possible but consider the following thoughts before doing so.

While it is true that by moving to a better musical playground of, let's say, New York or Los Angeles, you'd be surrounded by more industry professionals, and exposed to more clubs, venues, bands, and larger demographic audiences, you are now one more small fish in a very big sea of many other artists with the same goals. This could render you hidden amongst all your peers unless of course you have something fresh, and viable that has never been heard before in which case go for it any way that makes good business sense.

The second aspect to consider is your financial situation. To relocate you'd have to quit your current day job and hope that you can secure something in your new location ASAP. Can you survive for a while, supporting both your personal life and the band if you don't find work quickly? If you're brave enough to make the move, I'd suggest having a substantial bank account in case your cash outflow exceeds your inflow even for a brief time. Do research on how much it will cost to live in your new area. We all know New York is overly expensive and there are other areas of the nation that have higher property taxes than those around here, so be aware that your living expenses will almost undoubtedly increase by relocating. Also you may need to find new management, legal representation, and other industry services by moving. If you've developed a good relationship with your current business personnel, you might be getting yourself in hot water with hiring new staff. They will not be as familiar with your situation, they could be very dishonest, and they may cost you more than the people you're working with now should your current staff be unable to assist you from afar. Be sure to assess the relationships you've made and judge whether or not they'd be worth giving up just for a new place to set up shop. Other important things to consider are your style of music and what is happening in your area at the current time. With the number of New England-based bands that have been signed in the past few years it is quite clear that we currently have a hotbed here that many of you can take advantage of if you're timing and preparation are accurate. Think back to the beginning of the grunge craze. If your band sounded like any of the newer artists of today such as Godsmack or Staind, would moving to Seattle have helped you? I would assume not. Pay close attention to the styles of music that are current and what areas that the bands are hailing from. Chances are an out-of-state mini-tour is going to behoove you and may be the catalyst in your getting a deal but an actual relocation to another specific area may just keep you right where you are in terms of status and may render you starting from square one.

Thanks again. See you next time.

Karl is a graduate of U Mass Lowell with a degree in Music Business and is available for further questions at kahli676@yahoo.com

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THE ACE OF BASS

By Alan Andrade

Stretching Out the Chords

We're baaaack!! Whew, two months go by fast and here we are. What's up bass world...come on spring!! These dog days of winter can really get you down, bored with the same old routines. Yes, same old routines...like on our bass guitars (what a segue)! As bass players we know our basic functions in an ensemble and that is to maintain a solid foundation emphasizing the harmonic and rhythmic structure of a song. To some musicians this can mean throttling on the root for whatever it's worth! Many bass players have made millions doing this and there is nothing wrong with that but man, that can be so redundant.

Now you know why in the mid '90s people were toying with the idea of two-string basses...sheesh! One such spice to add to your playing is using the whole neck through compound intervals or chord extensions. Often used in jazz this basically means adding notes beyond the octave of the scale creating new colors and feel to the chordal progressions. This is a very exciting phase of music with endless possibilities. But for now I'll keep it simple. Remember, there are seven notes to the major scale plus the octave (repeat of the root in the next highest pitch). Thus if you add another note like the second note of the scale an octave higher you add seven to it and you get a ninth. Same as if you add a sixth...add seven and you get a thirteenth. Sharps and flats are also used regularly for these extensions. Make sure you know what scales coincide with what chord is being played. Try writing out the chord scale first. Remember this method should be used with taste and discretion as to not leave the roots totally. Check out those ninth chords in traditional funk!

This whole concept of experimenting with lines that add upper chord extensions can really make your bass line melodic and full. This is when the left hand (fretting hand) really has to be in shape to cover more of the neck so as always, be sure to have a good warm-up. This style of play works with all music and helps to open up harmonic structure greatly.

Check out some of these lines below, hopefully they'll get you going with your own ideas! 'Til next time...who let the funk out the trunk"...hey!

Ex. 1 Dm7

Ex. 2

Ex. 3 FAST!

Send me your questions or feedback via e-mail at: tuaze@yahoo.com



SPOTLIGHT THE SINGER

By Jeannie Deva

GREAT AUDITIONS, Part One

Going to auditions is a fact of life for most singers. Yet, the experience can often be nerve-racking and confidence-shaking, with a frequent defeat by Lady Luck. What can be done to eliminate the stress from this necessary ordeal? The key lies in your approach to the overall audition experience.

1. Empower yourself.

Recognize that you have the ability to create your own career.

2. Decide what it is that you want to achieve.

Look for and finding the right people and situations that align with your own goals and visions. Getting into a musical group has just as much to do with what you want for yourself as with what the auditions (those holding the audition) are looking for.

3. Decide on your options.

Make a list: what are your priorities, what can you do without.

DEVELOPING YOUR FOCUS...

Take some time to assess your level of expertise and determine your objectives. By doing so, it will become easier to decide on the appropriate steps that will help you arrive at the "larger picture."

Prior to answering any ads and making any phone calls, decide on the following: What do you hope to gain by auditioning? Do you just want to gain experience with the auditioning process, or are you ready for a high-level group of total professionals? Are there particular styles of music or shows that you are unwilling to be involved in? If you're a seasoned veteran, you're ready to audition appropriately; but if you need to hone your skills, you may want to audition for less demanding groups that allow you to work toward a professional level.

Write down a list of questions to ask before you make any inquiry phone calls. This should include deciding what you will use as audition material, and how this will be accomplished. Will they get you a tape of tunes they want you to learn for the audition? What about the key in which you'll sing each tune? Do they read sheet music and can you bring tunes you know already? It all depends on the type of band and situation, but you should know as much as possible so that you can prepare and be at your best. These line of questions and arrangements also let you know how organized they are and give you a sense as to what you can expect from them. The more organized the individuals, the more assured you can be that this group can set and achieve goals.

Next time in Part Two of this article, we'll look at ways to put your best foot forward during the phone call itself and other tips to help you find and succeed in your audition process!

© 2004 Jeannie Deva. Jeannie Deva is the founder of The Deva Method® A Non-Classical Approach for Singers and of Jeannie Deva Voice Studios since 1978. While her private voice studio is located in Los Angeles, Jeannie maintains private clients across the country and Europe. Author of the internationally published vocal home-study course: "The Contemporary Vocalist" book and CDs, she is flown to recording studios internationally as the session vocal coach/producer and has been endorsed by producers and engineers of the Rolling Stones, The Cars, Aerosmith, and many others. Clients include Grammy Award Winner Aimee Mann, Patty Griffin, Coppertree, Dar Williams, Moodcrush, members of the J. Geils band, Broadway's cast of Grease, the International Touring cast of Fame, Broadway's Grease and many more. Contact info: Boston: 617-536-4553; Cape Cod: 617-413-0243; Los Angeles: 818-446-0932; www.JeannieDeva.com.



DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW YOU DO THIS?

By Joel Simches

Episode 22: *I'm Not Paying You to Think!*

When you really sit down and think about it, writing, performing, and producing your own music requires a great deal of thought. You're constantly thinking about what chords to play, what words to say, what harmonies to sing and what overdubs to record. You think about timing, tempo, tools of the trade. You get caught up in the right and wrong ways of rehearsing and fine-tuning your songs. Sometimes it's not a bad idea to step back and look at the bigger picture. How can those thoughts and ideas affect how others will perceive your music and songs? How can those very thoughts betray all your intentions? Do you really need that fifth verse? Can you really sing that falsetto that you hear in your head? Will that tuba-oboe-violola section really enhance that second line in the bridge? Did I leave the space heater on in the room?? It's great to have a lot of ideas and it's wonderful to try different things, but it is also very possible to overthink, overanalyze, and overproduce. Often it is the gut feeling that must control the process. A song is finished when it is finished and should be allowed to go boldly into the world, unfettered by the fear of editing, constant tweaking, added CGI or colorization....or at least that's what I think.



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The Collisions

By Bill Copeland
Photo by Autumn Pincus



The punk power trio called The Collisions have made an impact on the Boston and New York City music scenes over the last three years. They formed near the end of the year 2000 and they released their debut album *Talk Is The New Action* last November. Bo Barringer fronts the band on guitar and vocals; he also writes the maniacal lyrics about life in the modern age. Barringer continues to play bass with his first Boston band, the blues-punk trio Caged Heat. He started a successful second project called Make Lisa Rich, which he fronted as singer and bass player. Now a guitarist, he has changed musical direction once again.

The Collisions have a darker and more driving sound than Make Lisa Rich. "The songs still have a lot of hooks. But it's a little louder, a little more aggressive, and it has more teeth to it. It has more meat to it," Barringer said. Barringer has seen a lot of labels thrown at The Collisions in order to describe their sound and style. "The best way to describe the band would be a cross between T.Rex and Wire, or maybe Cheap Trick and Wire," the front man said. "We're going for that post-punk thing. I started getting exposed to band like that ten or 12 years ago, bands like Wire and The Fall, Television, The Buzzcocks, The Psychedelic Furs. That stuff left an impression because it's got a nice minimal beat to it. I was aiming for that. They're very simple parts but smartly written parts." It is no coincidence that different people are hearing different things in The Collisions. "I got people throwing the word klezmer in there. I guess some songs come out sounding like that, and that's cool," he said. "I always thought it was cool how The Clash could throw in all kind of different sounds, like reggae and dove, but it still sounds like The Clash. They could drop references to a lot of different eras of rock music."

As for the klezmer, Barringer admits to mischievously using foreign musical references to give his melodies a darker and exotic twist. "We throw in different rhythms and different Mediterranean and Eastern song scales," he explained. "I think that's why people say it sounds klezmer."

One of the first bands I was in was a surf band. We played a lot of Dick Dale songs and a lot of Western songs, Spaghetti Westerns and things like that. That definitely creeps into the fold."

Barringer's main influences include Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones and other bands who saw their heyday in the 1970s, like T.Rex, Cheap Trick, and The New York Dolls. British Invasion stuff like The Beatles, The Who, The Kinks, and The Zombies also flow into his stream of consciousness.

"Sometimes you start out with a conscious effort to write something that sounds more like British invasion or something that's more punk," Barringer said. "It always ends coming out sounding like the band. I end up writing songs that I have fully conceptualized, but I leave parts undone just so I can get input from the other band members. You can get a lot of different ideas colliding and going back and forth. It makes it a little more spontaneous."

The band came up with the name The Collisions because everyone in the band has distinct influences and tastes that collide in the rehearsal room. "That's what being a rock band is all about, getting into a room and letting everyone's different influences collide," he said. "The guitar smashing against the drums and the bass rumbling underneath; that's what it's about. It's not about me sitting in my bedroom writing songs. There's so much more life that can come out of songs in rock music when you allow three or more different people to put all of their influences into it. You get lots of creative tension that way, and it's great."

For the live shows The Collisions play in Boston and New York City, Barringer and his men turn up the heat. In fact, the front man used to drop his pants during shows and perform in his BVDs. "I want to fucking floor people. I want them to walk out and say, 'Wow! Holy shit! I can't believe what I just saw.' I don't know if we're doing that yet I think we're leaving an impression on people. There are many, many bands playing in Boston and New York City every night and it takes a lot to stand out and make someone remember you after seeing your live show. We're definitely going for as much impact as we can. We just want to move bodies and move minds and make people feel like they left with something."

As far as moving minds, Barringer mines the depths of his darker emotions to arrive at central truths about the human condition. "A lot of those lyrics on this album came from me writing songs halfway and I would take the songs to these guys. I wrote words that were evocative of the sounds that were coming out. A lot of it comes out sounding very threatening. There's a lot of talk of fire, and death, and the devil. I wanted to get down to the evil and the sex underneath all the music that I was putting out with Make Lisa Rich. If it doesn't have a little bit of evil or a little bit of sex, then it's fluff."

Barringer's song "Gasoline Can" has a sense of purposeful anger. "That song is about someone going around burning bridges. It's using a metaphor of going around with a gasoline can and actually burning bridges. That was written about a couple of people I know, who will remain nameless. There are definitely people out there burning bridges. Somehow it struck me to write about that."

Another Barringer piece called "American Dream" opens the album with cynicism. The singer uses expletives to vent his frustration with technology. "That song is just the irony of how the American dream has changed a little bit where it incorporates all this technology. It's not just the kids, the house, the wife, and the car. It's more than that. It's more complicated. But at the same time people want the same thing. The hard drive, of course, is what everyone needs to have now, to be able to download so many things in so many seconds. I think it's people getting more and more obsessed with having this and that, accumulating more shit into their lives."

A cover of Robert Johnson's "Me and the Devil Blues" features Barringer's friend Chilly Kurtz on harmonica and reflects Barringer's interest in the blues format for expressing emotional content. That song about a man dealing with the devil seemed to Barringer to be a metaphor for real life devils.

"That sense of dread is underlying with everybody. People are walking around and they're not all there because they're thinking about planes blowing up and George Bush getting re-elected. Robert Johnson lived in a slightly different world. He had more of a palpable sense of dread in that he thought the devil was going to cash in on the deal that he struck with him and the hellhounds are on his trail. But I think everyone has some sort of hellhound on their trail, like losing their job and not being able to pay for everything. Or, they have a crazy girlfriend or boyfriend after them." ●

Barringer has a distinct vision for The Collisions and his lyrics. Supported by The Windjam label, The Collisions are likely to carve a solid niche for themselves in the city and elsewhere. To learn more about The Collisions, please visit www.thecollisions.com.

PRODUCT 62

By WFR

Photo by James Voss



WHEN YOU COME SO CLOSE to capturing the coveted prize of being number one, no amount of consolation matters. Having victory snatched right out of your hands and coming in second place in the second annual Beantown Meltdown is a feeling only this band is too familiar with. The Carolina Panthers can relate to what this feeling entails by coming so close to the heights of triumph only for it to be swept away. Product 62's style of modern rock reached a pinnacle in this year's competition. Momentous crowds, aggressive song writing, and seething execution of their live performance propelled them into the top tier of their musical category. Read on so you may be enlightened.

SoundCheck Magazine: Coming in second place at the Beantown Meltdown do you feel that this has elevated the band's visibility and how?

Wylie: Yes. We met a lot of bands and other people in the music business that we wouldn't have otherwise come across. We also gained some new fans. Overall it made us a stronger band.

SCM: Would you recommend entering the Beantown Meltdown to other up-and-coming bands in the future and why?

Voss: As long as it's at Goodtimes and Chris McMahon is running the show.

John: Yes, it's a good place to meet new people and the club is set up nice. The sound guy, Jim, is awesome. He really makes you feel comfortable on stage because he is so professional.

Bobby: Absolutely, big stage, big crowd, and it's a good place for unbiased criticism.

SCM: Who are the most memorable bands that have shaped Product 62's musical direction?

P62: The whole band agrees on TOOL, Incubus, Faith No More, and Deftones

SCM: Why is it so important for artists to have an element of cause in their art?

John: Music touches people in different ways. If you feel a certain opinion of yours is important enough to be part of your music and people can relate, then people will find your musical expression more interesting.

Voss: A true artist doesn't have a choice.

SCM: Who has pissed you off the most in the past year and why?

Jay: We have only pissed ourselves off. We disagree on what's most important for the band and what will

make us more successful. Other than that, everyone else has been pretty cool.

SCM: *What does your music reflect and why is it so important?*

Wylie: Our music reflects our emotions in every aspect. Every lyric, every note of every song represents who we are as individuals and as a band.

Bobby: Our music reflects something different for each of us. And I think that's why the lyrics are written ambiguously. Any song, or part of a song, can reflect a particular time in our lives or be used as a tool of release.

Voss: Music and life are one in the same.

SCM: *Have you any plans to record in the near future and have you selected a studio and or producer and why?*

Jay: Yes we are currently recording at Prism Sound Studio in Acton with John Ellis. I have to say if it weren't for our good friends Jim and Diane, this recording would not be possible. Their help is greatly appreciated. We are hoping to release our 7- or 8-song CD sometime in late Spring early Summer. We chose John Ellis at Prism Sound because a lot of people recommended him to us and he does incredible work. He's very meticulous and that's what we were looking for.

SCM: *What do you feel is the best approach for a band to get noticed?*

Bobby: Promotion. It's all about creating a buzz.

Wylie: Playing shows

John: Supporting other bands and promoting through a website helps.

SCM: *Some have said that you are the most improved band of the year how do you respond to that?*

Voss: With a humble "Thank you." We'll be even better next year!

Wylie: Well, since we sucked last year, I guess you could say that.

John: That's a good thing I guess. We practice a lot and wrote a lot of new material. I'm glad that people feel that way.

Bobby: I have to laugh. I remember Chris McMahon saying that to me and I explained that we're just getting back to normal.

Jay: We had a short breakup a while back and we feel we are only recently getting things back to the way it was before.

SCM: *What are coolest new cars being made today and what ones would you own if you had the cash?*

Voss: A purple Geo Metro.

Wylie: I'm not a big car guy. I guess I'd get a Hummer. Nothin' like a nice Hummer.

John and Bobby agree: A custom-made Product 62 American Chopper by the guys at Orange County Choppers, preferably documented on the Discovery Channel.

SCM: *What is the most played CD in your music collection?*

Wylie: I still listen to 8-tracks

Bobby: A Perfect Circle - *Mer de Noms*.

Voss: Lately Staind's *14 Shades of Grey*.

John: TOOL, *Lateralus* and *Lovage*

Jay: My all-time favorite CD has to be New Kids on The Block *Hangin' Tough*.

SCM: *Is sex needed as a major role in the arts today and do you think it's demeaning the culture?*

Bobby: That depends on your audience. As a musician, I'd have to say no, and it's being beaten to death. I'm personally not proud that I can enjoy watching most of today's videos after I hit the mute button. **John:** It's not needed but it gets a lot of attention. It's not demeaning if it's done tastefully.

Voss: Sex is pure and I think culture demeans it.

SCM: *What's the funniest thing that ever happened to the band?*

Wylie: We broke up - ha! That was funny...O.K., maybe not.

John: When Voss's brand-new Mesa Boogie amplifier crapped out on him at a Goodtimes show. It wasn't funny at the time, but looking back at how we just went with it and finished the show, it's funny. One of the most tragic moments somehow seems comical now and the most memorable for me.

Voss: When I joined the band.

SCM: *Who do you admire the most in the music industry and why?*

Wylie: Any artist that stays true to what they enjoy writing. Mike Patton and TOOL are good examples.

John: Mike Patton. He is involved in so many projects. He was in Faith No More and before and after that, Mr. Bungle, as well as a dozen or so other side projects. He's playing with Rahzel on March 9th at The Matrix in Boston. My favorite material he's done so far has to be Mr. Bungle and then *Lovage*.

Voss: Buzz from Unearth.

SCM: *Are trends needed to give artist a voice and a place in the music community and if so or not why?*

John: Trends aren't necessary but I guess they help. I think a lot of trends are unintentional. The artist acts or dresses a certain way and if someone is a fan they might want to show appreciation by acting or dressing like them.

Voss: The uncool always become cool again with time. ♡

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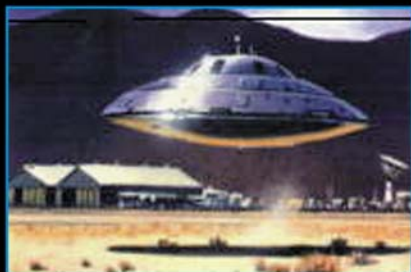
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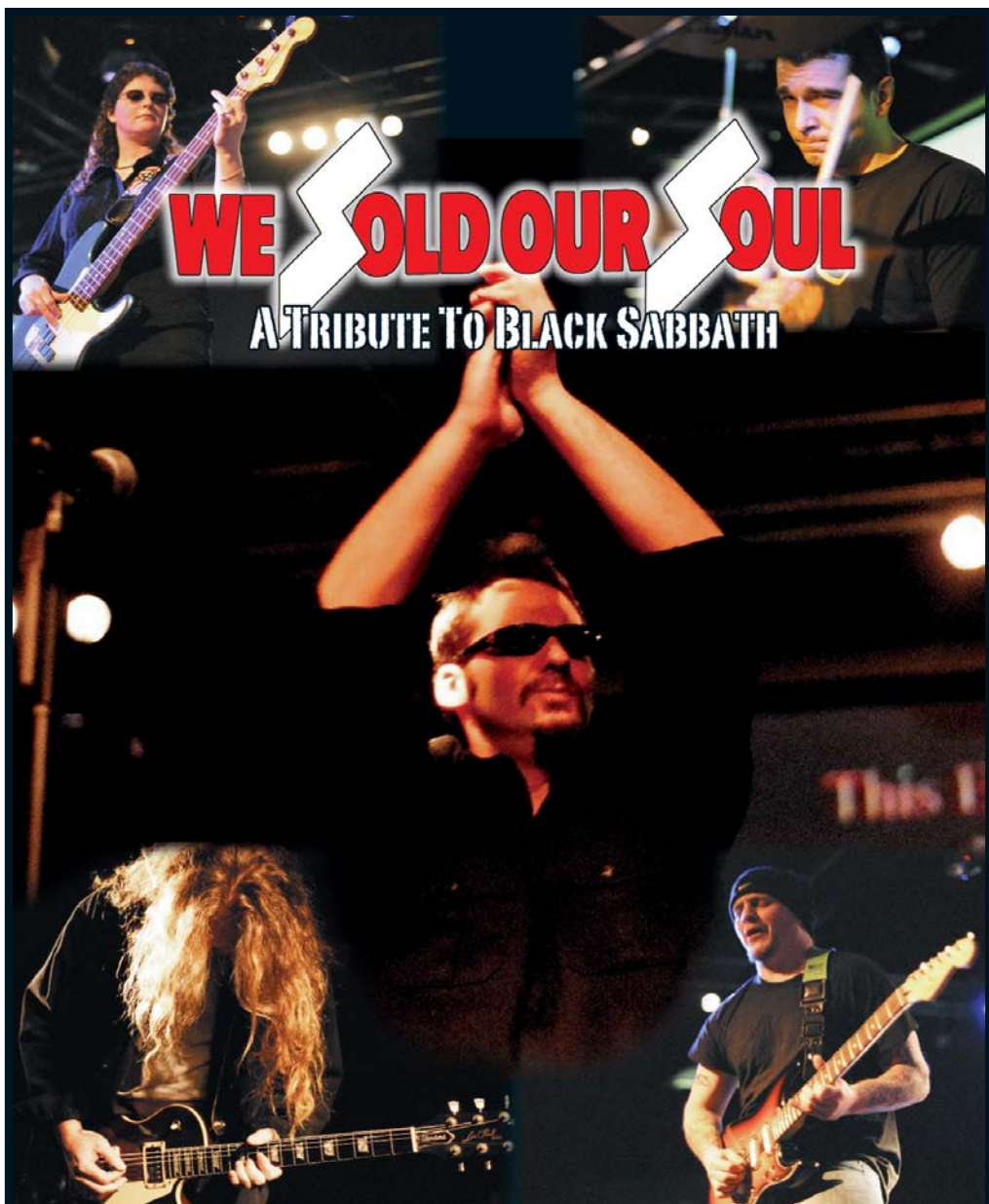
Pick up your copy of "The Electric Caper", Papermoon's sophomore release on Same Sky Records @ www.papermoon.org, Boston Guitar and all Newbury Comics locations.

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THE AMPLIFIER

PAPERMOON

The Electric Caper
papermoon.org

This is one of those "grows on you" bands...Layers of guitar, vocals that travel from bluesy/rock to haunting, rhythms that seamlessly adapt to the mood of each song. Papermoon threw a few curves in this - but they are welcome, surprise twists. I thought with the first tune "Center of Gravity" that I had a standard rock 'n' roll band spinning out my speakers - which would have been perfectly cool to me, but what I got in the next ten tunes were slices of alterna/modern rock, jaunty, jangly (even once billy-ish) rock, and deep, distinctive, provocative tunes. Though they possess some familiar tinges (the singer's voice at times sounds like Brad Roberts of Crash Test Dummies), Papermoon exude an earthy and sincere musical presence. A few tunes stray a bit but overall I'd say Papermoon has a unique rock vibe that potentially sets them apart.

- Debbie Catalano



THE COLLISIONS

Talk Is The New Action
thecollisions.com

It's a three-member guitar band who is "On A Hell Bent Mission to Revive the Angst in Rock 'n Roll..." So says the enclosed info sheet. The lead vocalist has a sexy delivery when he sings soft and low but then he transforms into a screaming meany when all hell breaks loose. He sounds great. Got a nice guitar sound that I'm liking on the simple, two-stroke hood for "The One That You Love." "Trying To Be Nice" has that contained energy thang going on that sounds as if it's ready to explode at any moment. The distorted, echoed vocals on "Me and The Devil Blues" tickle along with those blooz harp bitz. We finish up with a 3/4 time tune name of "Your Gun" with its effected vocals and fiddle lines. It's a pretty good band with a decent look and some good songs. I wouldn't say they're going to change the face of the industry.

- L.A. Joe



LOVEWHIP

Bounce Hall
lovewhip.net

Now if I mention Gwen Stefani it's not because it's ska stuff and they've got a girl singing lead. Nope. She really does sound like Gwen a little. So we got de reggae mahn. Iree and all that krappe. But seriously folds, she's got a great voice, the drummer has the feel that comes right from beloved Jah at birth

and those determined little bass licks move you just right. Then we've got the guitars and some wonderful horn lines and some fine flute frills and even some marimba and vibes. Real island mahn. Its all so clean; wonderfully performed and recorded too. I'm just loving this band. I'm no authority, but I've produced and bunch of reggae and played in reggae bands on and off for years. Two thumbs up for this bunch and their catchy songs.

- L.A. Joe

THADDEUS HOGARTH

It Might As Well Be Now
thaddeushogarth.com

Hmm. Another stumper. Good, strong CD unto itself...but I do know a bit of the past. Stick with me here: Thaddeus recorded "Cold Shack" with the Heavy Metal Horns, Thaddeus recorded "Cold Shack" as a solo artist, and now he's recorded "Cold Shack Attack"—which is another reworking. This is sort of indicative of the big picture as I see it. Thaddeus has polished his vocal skills and eliminated all the snags...but he hasn't done much differently. I like his style, I like his sound, I think he's got something good, and I really like this CD—he does need to try some other stuff, though. Stop looking back—live for the moment! C'mon, Thaddeus, you owe us more than this.

- Smash

LUCUBRO

I.O.I
lucubro.com

It's a three-member rock band with drums, bass, and a girl playing guitar and singing; she sounds just great. On the enclosed info sheet they "... describe their sound as heavy metal with a heavy doom influence. "Yup, it's got doom written all over it; dark stuff. Nice-looking band by the way with some tattoos and lots of long hair and dark clothing. The CD art is suitably gloomy with its purple designs and black-ish backgrounds. As to the music, competent musicians all and again, I'm loving her voice. The songs get one thumb up as I'm not hearing anything much that I haven't heard before but still, the melodies took some thought and the guitar lines aren't directly off the shelf. Toon Titles: "Broken Glass," "I Still Remember," "Under Water," and "Turning Into You."

- L.A. Joe



WHITE

Set Myself On Fire

An excellent piece of work from Jim Foster and Company who form the band White. "Set Myself On Fire" has a couple of tracks that, in my opinion, are very reminiscent of Marilyn Manson style music and vocals and then heavy like the Jim

Foster we all know from his previous bands. Do I need to mention them? I don't think so, unless you have been living under a rock for several years. Anyway, I've been waiting for this CD for a while and no disappointment at all. A three-piece band that has made it simple but technical all at the same time, gives White's "Set Myself On Fire," a push in the right direction. The title track is one of my faves, along with Track #3, "Last Song." Another band you need to see live if you haven't done so already.

- Metal Wench

ROBIN LANE AND THE CHARTBUSTERS
PIECE OF MIND
randomrogue.com/robinlane

Right off the bat, this is a quality recording; very well done. Robin's got a fairly low voice for a girl and it's got a roughness to it. Her delivery is loose with an old-time rock and roll, devil-may-care feel. The drums and guitars sound wonderful and the songs are well-written though I don't hear a smash hit single. Too bad that; it's a nice-looking band. Robin wrote most of the songs and she plays guitar, too. My fav of the bunch is cut number five name of "Little Bird." Other fine titles include: "All Fall Down," "Last One To Know," "The Letter" with its gorgeous acoustic guitars and side-stick powered feel, "Psychotic Disorders" and "Talk To You" with its world-class guitar, strong lyrics, and driving backbeat. Again, it's a good band in need of a chartbusting hit.

- L.A. Joe

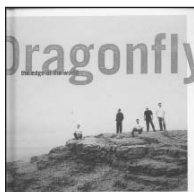
OVM
Welcome To Fabulous Sin City
ovmhiphop.com

So I got this CD, right, called Sin City/ O.V.M and its title "Gamble Your Life Away" says it all. This is a CD loaded with some good hip-hop, and steady backbeats, provided by DJ Sab Ill Finga. The triple mc is in effect at this moment in time with NODOZ, ALIAS, and SUNNY BLACK adding some intense lyrical content here. My personal favorites here are "Take Me Away" with a very cool chorus featuring Ann Palumbo and another Gem called "Thicker than Blood" that also features Ann Palumbo. These tunes stand out because of that great chorus line and cool backbeats and some intense lyrics. "Take Me Away" reminds me of loyalty and "Thicker Than Blood" is just about that. I always say that blood is thicker than water - know what I mean.... the music is very jazz influenced, which adds to the listening pleasure. This is definitely good for the earlobes

- Ace Duecey

DRAGON FLY
The Edge of the World
mikisingh.com

Well done. Well done indeed. It's a five-member commercial sounding pop-rock band, but it's all about a fellow name of Miki Singh; a brother lion. He plays guitar and he wrote most of these excellent songs. He also sings them and



he's got a terrific voice. I know, I'm gushing. See, when you come upon a band this well recorded, with such a good lead vocalist and such great songs, well, it's overwhelming. The band is pro and the two CDs even come mounted in a booklet loaded up with photos and lyrics and band info. On CD one, I'm liking "Find You," "Back in Bed," the dreamy "Wedding Ring" with its sombre guitar hook and "She Hates It." On CD two, I'm liking "Think About Me," "Lay Low," "Mama" with its smooth wah guitar and popping keyboard lick, "Rescue" and lastly "Beautiful Thing." By the way, good looking band and props to my friends at M-Works for a mastering job well done.

- L.A. Joe

LITTLE A
Starsfade
littleamusic.com

Little a, a band with a little name but a big rockin' sound...at least for the beginning of their latest release, "Starsfade," seem to assert themselves as hard rockers but fall off the table faster than a curve ball from a major league pitcher. You gotta love the play on words throughout the disc as every word is printed in lowercase letters. Comparing Little a to any known artist is a rather difficult task but Nickelback with a much darker edge came to mind when hearing the first track "Tomorrow." No, this is not your innocent song sung in the play "Annie" but a track that features lots of layered guitars from David Kirkdorfer and busy drum beats from Danny Lee. Singer Bruce Grover really wants to get his point across that tomorrow is the time as he aggressively repeats the song's title over and over towards the end of the song...when you want to get your point across do it right. The title track follows and shows Grover really pushing himself with the lyric "I want one." Not sure what the "one" is though....maybe a star? Despite being the title track, "Starsfade" didn't impress the auditory senses as much as "Tomorrow." "Three Days" shows a more mellow side to Little a resembling something akin to soft emo-core with a very busy rhythm section. The disc closes with "Wishes Fishes" another drawling tune that doesn't really solidify what Little a were all about when they kicked "Starsfade" off. They came charging out of the gate but never even made it to the home stretch.

- Karl Russo

THINNER
Vessels
thinnerrock.com

I'm not even sure what genre to place "Thinner" in. The eccentric sounds in Tracks 5 and 7 (such as strange horns and telephone noises) throw off the idea of the whole punk-ish rock theme that they seemed to be trying for. Being their fourth album you'd think they would've picked a sound by now, but I guess experimenting is what they're out to do. With tracks like "Pennyfinger" and "Amazing What," it's almost like the band is trying too hard to add that grungy pop sound to an immensely mellow melody. I have to say that the title track, "Vessels," definitely expresses a solace ending to an exposed

"power" style album. The bands pronenes's for crafty songs and creative lyrics has an obvious affect on how superfluous the pop rock appears. All in all I would say that "Vessels" is a polished collection of songs that manifest the band's craving for attempting new levels of sound.

- Jessi Morgan

48 ROOMS
Endurance
48rooms.com



"Endurance" is a perfect third album for 48 Rooms. The album title alone explains the head-thrusting authenticity behind the band's seven new tracks. Bassist, Brendan Connors rips up the songs "Unison" and "A Last Look (Part II- Redemption)." These two songs undoubtedly help create the "genuine metal" sound that the band was looking for on this album. The last two tracks on the album are an aggressive outburst of the band's efforts to create an explicit and distinct sound. The band intended on using them as one song but later decided to split them but still allow the mellowed out first half to flow into the heavier second half. If this album was intended to increase the band's listening audience, I say rock on! This album is totally a step up in the right direction for 48 Rooms.

- Jessi Morgan

SOMETIMES SHE BURNS
Apart at the Seams

I can truthfully say that Sometimes She Burns is a good "punk" band according to the current "punk" music we are forced to listen to. Sometimes She Burns is more of an emo-scream-o band than anything else. In most of its songs their singer consistently sings about relationship issues; however, the mix of the good guitar and steady drum beats create a pleasing affect. The first song on the album "Bitch" is very catchy, and would be amazing to hear live. There are many moments in the album where it is mellow then will transition quickly into power chords and heavy distortion. It sometimes feels like Blink 182, or other pop bands, but still makes for a good song. Even so, Sometimes She Burns is not perfect. During almost all of the songs their vocalists throw in the occasional f*** and hardcore sound that the rest of the song does not need. Ultimately, "Apart at the Seams" is a good album but tries too hard to be something it isn't.

- Ari Weinkle

ROBOTZEN
Alice Meets Caterpillar

This is one of the weirdest albums I have heard in a long time. Robotzen is an instrumental techno band. By this I mean they make their songs on a computer but record the sounds from real instruments. Let me start by saying that they have some great instrumentals that could be great trance tracks if it were not for one thing: their vocalist. Their vocalist goes on in a monotonous tone, trying to make the lyrics she sings sound much more intense than they actually are. For example, in the third track, "Call Me Eve," she goes on singing "so

does the brotherhood" over and over. As noted before, the instrumentals are great and need a stronger vocalist to accompany them. I would not recommend this duo until their singer can meet the standards of the weird and creative music.

- Ari Weinkle

SENSORIUM
Self Entitled

"Dispatch" acoustic meets some funky rhythms when Peter Angelos and Jerry Chu come together in Sensorium. These guys have a great original sound that is not only catchy, but also very well done. There are enough instrumentals and vocals to make it seem like a large band is jamming away. What I really like about Sensorium is that they have some serious songs, like "Don't Say Good Bye," but then they completely switch their whole sound around in the next song, "In A World With You" that is extremely reminiscent of Cake's first album. All of this is also accompanied by acoustic guitar that really adds some flavor to the already lively rhythm. Sensorium's creative rhythms and unique sounds make it a great album. It crosses many genres and a fan of any one of these genres will be pleased.

- Ari Weinkle

LEMONSTONE
Miles Away
lemonstone.net

I grabbed this CD because both the band's name and their description in their bio struck my fancy - but of course "acoustic rock trio" is not exactly the most exciting sum-up so I go into these reviews not knowing quite what to expect. In the case of Lemonstone the reaction was all positive. I am particularly impressed that this trio are all aged 21 as their abilities and distinction belie their age. They sound like seasoned, confident players, and their songs come off as mature and together. Aside from this age thing, I was drawn to the music: a big, full sound holds the warm acoustic-y rock grooves. Throw in some earthy folk and funk, heartfelt vocals, and sharp musicianship (the bass especially caught my ears), and you've got the makings of a band that could make a name for themselves in this genre. Yeah, it's like three hipper, more rock 'n' roll John Mayers wrapped in a package called Lemonstone - contemporary acoustic rock that can win over the college set all the way to Gen Xers like myself. Keep it up, guys - youth plus talent can only lead to a good following and future.

- Debbie Catalano

KYLE VINCENT
Solitary Road
kylevincent.com

You don't hear enough of this these days - an entire CD of contemporary ballads. Accompanied by acoustic and electric guitar, piano/keys, bass (all of which Kyle plays, though some tracks Colby Pollard takes the bass), harp, English, French, and flugal horns, oboe, and more, at various times add a lush quality to what could be considered a cross between the singer/songwriter and adult contemporary genres. But what makes this album particularly exceptional is Kyle Vincent's

voice - smooth, calming, alluring and infused with genuine passion. One can't help but be touched by the emotion he conveys in each note, expressing the heart of each song. I've seen Kyle live so I can verify this: His voice is just as amazing and powerful in a live situation. Top that with sincere, heart-on-his-sleeve lyrics and you can't help but want to meet Kyle at the end of this Solitary Road (O.K, was that a girlie thing to write or what?!).

- Debbie Catalano

THE WEISSTRONAUTS FEATURING PETE WEISS

Featuring Spritely
stereoriffic.com



I've been on Pete Weiss's e-mail list for so long that I felt I just had to take this one for review and I'm sure glad I did! Twanging, swing-y, upbeat surfer rock - any winter blues or cold bones are sure to get thawed out by the good-time vibes The Weisstronauts put out on this CD. This all-instrumental band features a top-notch cast of musicians - Pete Weiss, Kevin Quinn, Aaron Tap, Emily Jackson, and Ken Lafler with contributions by Rich Gilbert, Dana Colley, Peter Linnane, Nathan Logus, and Will Quackenbush. You're getting high-quality musicianship here in a fun, let-it-go CD. To list all the instruments used would take up too much room but the band knows how to create music that either gets you moving, warms you up, or brings you back - for example the accordion in "Tawdry" time-traveled me to one of my Italian family parties...but that's just me. We've got other great sounds and instruments - various brands and types of guitar, bass, percussion, drums, banjo, pedal steel guitar, etc. Regardless, I listened to this CD three times in a row and loved it each time. Ah sunny, warm days; pleasant memories; retro grooves; sharp, excellent playing...just a few great reasons to check this out. Surf's up and I'm craving the warm weather but until then The Weisstronauts will help hold me over...

- Debbie Catalano

HIP TANAKA

Splinter
thelocal33.com

Give me something I can sink my pen into - Hip Tanaka provides nice, juicy unique rock. Yum. First-time listen, it's a bit of a scattered mind boggler as they wave and jump and skip from theatrical, almost rock opera-ish rock to straight good ol' punk, to avant-garde-ish rock, to what I felt was Brit pop rock a la The Kinks - my fav sound of all in this record. Obviously this quirky diversity is Hip Tanaka's MO - not every band can pull this off but these guys are adept at their craft and do what they do oh so very well. Very cool, catchy, different, well-executed...a detour from the norm. You'll feel hip just by virtue of listening to it (yeah, I know that's not where the name came from but I couldn't help it!).

- Debbie Catalano

ONE HAND FREE onehandfree.com

The most pleasant surprise I've had in quite some time—THESE GUYS ARE STUNNING! Really! Soulful in a Muscle Shoals/Allman's kind of way—searing slide guitar, bluesy vocals, swirling organ, and roots to spare—One Hand Free is the real deal. What the...where the...how...who the heck ARE these guys? New Hampshire? Maine? Huh? Tough to tell. The mental picture I get is rolling into Smalltown, Nowhere about 10 p.m. on a Friday night...and the place is deserted. Even the local gas station is closed—lights off. In fact, the whole place seems dark. And quiet. Damn quiet. Through the darkness you suddenly hear something...and the whole scene is just strange enough that you're persuaded to turn down the most "main" looking street you can find. A couple blocks down you see every '70s muscle car and/or 4X4 in town, some faded neon lights, and you hear the thump of music. A bar. Gotta be. With a name like "Donnie's Pub"—even though Donnie's probably been dead for 15 years. You open the door and are immediately sucked into a room where there's not quite enough room, too many people, and too much cigarette smoke. The air is thick and moist—so much so that you get a contact-buzz in seconds. A bead of sweat runs down from your temple and onto your neck. Then, before you can think, you're face to face with some corn-fed cowgirl (or corn-fed Brad Pitt look-alike) and you're dancing...it's like "Roadhouse"...and THIS is the band up on the stage...

- Smash

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JEFFERSON DAVIS
Lookin' For A Way
JeffersonDavisMusic.com

"Yeehaw," begins song four titled "Jackanapes" on Jefferson Davis's newest release "Lookin' For A Way." Davis is an original alt-country musician that combines rock, twang-pop, and good old bluegrass to form an interesting and technically difficult sounding album. His sentimental lyrics throw the listener back to the days of roots blues and simple, heartfelt songwriting. On Track 5, "Trailer Park," he sings, "And in the end / the life you take / is equal to the life you make. And the life you make / is never as good / as the life you fake." He makes his point while sticking to classic lyrics with a clearly stated message. The first two songs on the album "Party" and "Given All the Love" are more radio-friendly, with modern lyrics, themes, and a slightly more polished rock sound. These two tracks help give this disc more personality than I have seen squished into a five-track album - ever. It is something entirely unique. His effortlessness and expertise with a guitar are evident in his fancy finger work on every song. Being a talented musician himself, Davis also successfully emulates musicians such as Tom Waits and Bob Dylan. The only criticism I have of this disc is that there isn't more on it. Five tracks hardly does Mr. Davis justice, please sir, can we have some more?

- Andrea McPhee

JESS MCDONOUGH
Every Little Piece
jessmcdonough.com



Jess McDonough is the red rose in a sea of bright yellow dandelions. At first glance you don't notice her swaying among the other plants but taking a closer look, her color and individuality is evident along with the beauty the flower encompasses. Jess McDonough is that musician you heard the first night you went to that dark, smoky coffee shop in the middle of nowhere. You didn't know who she was but you did know that when the girl started to perform, the whole place got quiet and watched slightly slack-jawed at her talent. You wanted her CD but at the time she was too poor to record and was playing because she loved to. You never forgot that night or the music, but slowly you forgot the girl. Her album, "Every Little Piece," starts with the upbeat but lyrically downtrodden tune "Already Dead." She captures you with her strong yet smooth and mellow vocals and toe-tappin' beats while keeping you interested with her heartfelt lyrics. "Paranoid by my own reflection / I'm getting older by the day," McDonough sings. "It's clear from the outside that / I'm fooled by my own deception." She reminds me of a much younger and less vocally mature Martina McBride who sings belty, pop country tunes. In a few years McDonough's voice will give even the greatest a run for their money. McDonough also reminds me of a happier, less pretentious, Ani DiFranco. Like Ani, the girl tells it like it is with her raw and honest lyrics while showcasing her amazing vocal ability and skill with the microphone. She sings full speed ahead and isn't afraid of experimenting with different harmonies. McDonough is destined for the radio and beyond, but first I think she is des-

tinued for your CD player. You have to hear it to believe.

- Andrea McPhee

THE SECRET CHANNEL
Have You Heard
thesecretchannel.com

They call their music power pop. Sounds about right. Its rocky stuff the four of them are playing and singing. Got a girl playing bass, geez I think she's playing bass; tough to tell from the single CD photo and they don't make mention of who plays what on the CD insert or info sheets. "Launch (Moon Patrol Info)" is a Hendrix-like cacophony of distorted guitar whanglings (just made that word up) and feedback. Once we've got that out of our systems, we move into "Moon Patrol" with its cool guitar hook, over the top drumming and classic rock el-distorto vocals. "I Still Need You" is a bit more melodic and the CD closer "We Don't Care" is full of drama. Decent band, decent CD, decent songs: decent.

- L.A. Joe

THE AUDIANTS
All The Time In The World
audiants.com



Cool name. Got audience in there, audio, ants; catchy. It's a four-member rock band of young, good-looking guys and they sound just great. Solid drums and bass, well-thought-out guitar and keyboard parts and distinctive sounding lead vocalist. The dark, blue-black CD art seems a bit out of place as a lot of these are quick-tempoed songs and his loose vocal delivery and fast vibrato lend a lot of energy to the songs, guess I'm thinking reds and yellows... oops, that's McDonald's. "The Next Time We Fall" is their strongest song and certainly has the most radio legs. "Holding Pattern" sounds pretty good and I'm liking the acoustic powered title cut "All the Time In the World" as well. "Fume" is a modern sounding rocker with some feedback over the intro hooks. I calls it a "good" CD.

- L.A. Joe

THE NEW ELEMENT
Forgiveness is My Curse
undergroundproducts.com

Let's call this stuff metal core for lack of a more suitable appellation. Got that fast-twitch double bass drum thang going on and gargantuan guitars and a lead vocalist who yells and rants and pulls off a lovely "Wolfie" growl. I'm liking opening cut "Stigmata" with its tempus fugit and dark guitar dynamics. Title cut "Forgiveness is My Curse" is next with its spacey intro and start/stop motif. Nice lyrics by the way, not just your "I Hate Everything" mindset common to the genre. "Xax" opens up with lots of screaming and then we're into a Fred Durst like type rant with another gorgeous, power riff and "Wolfie" salt and peppering. The CD ends with "Trading One Deadache For Another" and "The Red Scare," which is more of a production piece with respect to arrangement, tempo and style changes, and overall grit.

- L.A. Joe

nervous and I knew that I broke something. I ran out the side door of The Palladium and started running down the street at full speed because I knew I did something wrong. [Laughs] My first instinct was to run, but then I got all the way to the Centrum, and I said to myself, "Wait a second, everyone knows who I am. Why am I running?" They filmed the damn DVD of me smashing a monitor. Who the hell am I running from? [Laughing hysterically] So, I went back to The Palladium and got a boatload of shit from the sound guys. They yelled at me and said, "Hey, didn't you get the thing in the mail that said you can't break stuff and throw your guitar out to the audience." I said, "In the mail? Did you send it to me?" The guy just looked at me like I was an asshole. I was being wicked sarcastic. Anyway, I told Scott Lee that I slipped and I still stick to that story. Imagine that? I ran to the Centrum. I was so embarrassed.

SCM: *Ha! That's amazing! Hey it's in print now so you better watch out. Maybe you should run away from this interview!*

Ken: [Laughs] I got shit from my band but they were cool about it. They knew I was just being an idiot.

SCM: *So do you think there will be any crazy antics from Unearth at this year's Ozzfest?*

Ken: We're gonna do something crazy. I don't know what its gonna be, but we're gonna get creative and do something a little stupid. We're not gonna dress up like penises or anything, but I have a few good ideas.

SCM: *Is there anything that you would like to add?*

Ken: I'll sum this up right now. If you listen to shitty music, and you listen to bands that paint their faces who aren't KISS, go friggin' buy an Every Time I Die album; buy a Lamb Of God album; buy a Killswitch album; buy a Shadows Fall album; buy an old Disembodied album. There is so much good music out there that there is no need to listen to really bad bands like Spineshank. I really want people to listen to good music.

SCM: *I just have one final question for ya, dude. Are you ever going to wear any of those pretty-boy turtleneck sweaters of yours on stage?*

Ken: [Laughs] Dude, shut up! 🤔

For info on Unearth check go to, www.metalblade.com.

STOIC - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

SCM: *So what do they [Ken and Alvan] think is the next level? Do you think it's going to one of those labels like Metal Blade or Earache or whatever?*

Stoic: I think the main focus is to try to get us in some type of rotation with a radio station.

SCM: *You definitely have radio tunes on "Eye Conceive."*

Stoic: I think so and the thing is when you played "Say One Thing" the other day on your show, I didn't realize until I heard it on the radio mixed in with other songs, that song works, too! You know metal is fuckin' huge. Even Al said that the fuckin' indie stuff is only big in the cities, like in Boston and New York. But he was like, There's a lot of fucking mileage between New York and L.A.

SCM: *I know, look at Shadows Fall, they're such a perfect example, they got the Best Underground Metal Act of 2003 at the European Metal Awards, which was with Marilyn Manson, Dope, and all these other huge bands. And that's a Boston band.*

Stoic: That's what got to happen. There was that era where like Godsmack and Staind broke - and that's been a while, and there's a lot of good talent in Boston.

SCM: *What would you guys describe your music as?*

Stoic: We're definitely a big blend of a lot of styles.

SCM: *I think you probably would fall into the hardcore or metal core style.*

Stoic: There are too many classifications and genres. See then the other thing is I say it sometimes as a joke but I think our songwriting is very poppy.

SCM: *No!*

Stoic: You don't think so? I don't know. That's just how I feel about our songwriting. Not the riffs, I'm talking about the arrangements. Actually Marilyn Manson would be a good way to describe it because you know how he has the heavy verses and then the choruses are really big, they seem to almost expand.

SCM: *So you're saying because of the way you write because it goes from the beginning to the chorus. Alright....*

Stoic: It's funny because I said to these guys like kidding around that we're like metal pop, and they're like, What?!

Brendan: Since I joined with Nate this was my first heavy experience. I was in jazz bands.

SCM: *That's why you can play good though.*

Stoic: That's why you don't suck as a bass player! 🤔

For info on Stoic check out their new website, www.stoicband.com.

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